

APPENDIX C

Citizen Comments

**Public Comments at Public Hearing
Monday, February 6, 2012 at 7:00 P.M.
Durham City Council
(Excerpted from Approved Minutes)**

Subject: To conduct a public hearing to receive public comments on the FY 2012-2013 Annual Action Plan "Needs".

Interim Community Development Director Reginald Johnson made comments regarding this item referencing that the City of Durham is one of the entitlement cities from the U. S. Department of Housing and Urban Development and as one of the requirements, the City must hold the annual public needs hearing.

Wilmur Conyers, of the Community Development Department, stated the purpose of this public hearing tonight would be to receive public comment on the community development needs in Durham neighborhoods as it relates to the receipt and use of Community Development Block Grant funds, Home Investment Partnership funds, and Emergency Solutions Grant funds for the preparation of the 2012-2013 Annual Action Plan. She referenced that this public hearing was advertised in The Herald Sun, Carolina Times, via list serve and on the Department's website, at least ten days prior to this public hearing. Ms. Conyers stated the City is required to hold at least two public hearings prior to the submission of its Annual Action Plan-- the first meeting must be held early in the developmental stage of the Plan and the second public hearing will be held approximately in late April. She stated the plan must be submitted to the Department of Housing and Urban Development by May 15. Regarding the FY 12-13 allocations, she reported based on information released from the Department of Housing and Urban Development on January 17, 2012 the City will expect to receive \$1,638,531 in CDBG funds, \$767,896 HOME funds, and \$152,760 in Emergency Solutions Grant funds formerly known as Emergency Shelter Grant funds. She stated as a part of the Annual Action Plan process, an application workshop for federal funds was held on November 14, 2011 and the department received approximately 17 applications which are currently being reviewed and evaluated with recommendations to be forwarded to the City Manager. Upon the City Manager's approval, the proposed recommendations [draft Annual Action Plan –funding chart that will identify proposed recommendations] will be released for a 30-day public review and comment period. Subsequent to that public review, a second public hearing will be held in late April and all comments from that public hearing and written comments received during the development of the Action Plan will be incorporated into the final Plan.

Mayor Bell opened the public hearing.

Ruth Poole stated she was present to register a complaint regarding inaccurate housing code violations cited against her property at 2405 Owens Street and commented on the repairs and bills associated with the windows and foundation. She asked Council to make some adjustment to the bill she received for \$7,680 which is unfair.

City Manager Bonfield stated this was the first time he has heard about this complaint and asked Ms. Poole to leave her information with Karmisha Wallace of the City Manager's Office for follow up regarding this situation.

Fuller Sasser, representing the Durham Interfaith Hospitality Network [IHN] Board, stated IHN partners with 30 local congregations to provide meals and overnight housing within their own facilities for homeless families in Durham. He referenced the day house and case management services that will allow them to develop life and job placement skills, reported they serviced 28 families last year and had to turn down families due to capacity. He requested the same funding as last year for case management.

Monica Jenkins, representing Durham Interfaith Hospitality Network, stated she was serving as the absent voice of homelessness, shared her homeless experience and asked Council to support funding for DIHN to help families who are homeless.

Terry Allebaugh voiced his support for two initiatives. He asked Council to fund the penny for housing campaign that supports the development of permanent supportive housing for homeless individuals with disabling conditions and other special needs populations. Secondly, he asked Council to follow through on a pledge made last fall to support efforts that will fully fund a housing program that will end homelessness for at least 40 families over the next year. He reported the households that were assisted through President Obama's stimulus package will soon be expiring. He informed Council that a group of partners have secured \$100,000 and there may be a good chance for an additional \$100,000 from the private sector. He said with a match of \$200,000 from the City, you can all make good on your pledge and can make a significant step toward ending family and child homelessness.

DeWarren Langley, Chair, Citizens Advisory Committee, discussed the role of CAC and stated they will have a representative present at each Coffee with Council session. He stated residents need to be engaged and a part of the decision making process throughout all phases of community development within their respective communities. Also, he thanked the Mayor for his commitment to affordable housing and neighborhood revitalization.

Debbie White, representing CASA, reported they are breaking ground on ten new apartments for homeless veterans on Guess Road; thanked Council for supporting their efforts and efforts of other non-profits to provide decent and affordable housing. She asked Council to continue the funding priority for housing people with special needs and very low income that earn less than 30 percent of area median and to provide funds for rental assistance with a priority for people with a disability or who are experiencing homelessness.

Dan Levine, representing Self-Help, stated they have expressed concerns in the past about the increasing gap between affordable housing needs and available resources. He discussed the Housing Funding Strategy report and HUD's funding cut for FY11 and FY12. He asked Council if an updated housing funding strategy will be developed or already exists that will address the new funding realities and ongoing needs. He further

asked if there is still a commitment to providing Southwest Central Durham and Northeast Central Durham sources of funds--\$437,500 per year for four years in the General Fund for housing development as well as \$250,000 per year in General Fund on an ongoing basis for permanent supportive housing. He asked Council and staff to look at how best to allocate funding and where that funding will come from.

Dr. Sharon Elliott Bynum, representing Healing with CAARE, spoke in support of funding for their transitional housing program. She stated they currently provide housing for nine homeless veterans who have access to their supportive services located under their one-stop shop. She reported they are currently constructing a 15-bed dormitory for homeless veterans at their site in Northeast Central Durham and they have a home in need of rehab for homeless women. She stated the last few years they have offered their support and facility to local homeless efforts; however, the distribution of funds has not been equitable or available to their agency. She asked Council for a one-time allocation of \$108,000 for the completion of their VA project and renovation of their property on Corporation Street so that they may continue to provide housing for an additional 19 individuals.

Victoria Peterson mentioned when HUD funding is used for remodeling and fixing up houses--local residents be hired for these jobs. She made comments regarding the Section 3 requirement which addresses the issue of hiring local residents and the Mayor's speech that addressed unemployment rate in the African American community and crime.

Lanier Blum urged Council to direct the City Manager to 1) prepare a fully accurate capital improvement program budget for housing production—show all the priority projects, then confirm sources of funds, show the gaps, and projects desired, but not funded, show exactly what it would take to pay off any loans the City plans to assume and where the payments will come from, what they will be used for; 2) explain to the public what is going on with the City's housing projects in progress—what is the plan for, cost of and repayment strategy for borrowing from HUD; what is the plan and budget for housing investments in Southwest Central Durham, Northeast Central Durham and Southside neighborhood; how many dwellings does the City plan to project for people whose incomes are below 30 percent of area median, and how much supportive housing; and what if any funds will the City invest to help Durham Housing Authority. In closing, she stated these plans need to be developed and explained in a way that everyone can comprehend, participate in and invest in.

Jim O'Reilly stated Durham can only expect to receive block grants that amount to less than 60 percent of the amount assumed in the current five-year plan. He stated the City spent down nearly all the local funds from past housing bonds to start the redevelopment at Rolling Hills and now Durham's housing resources are dramatically diminished. He asked Council to find the resources to maintain Durham's production and replace housing, especially for very low income people in existing neighborhoods and housing developments. He stated other large cities have passed numerous housing bonds since Durham's last referendum in 1996 and Durham lags way behind our neighbors when it comes to housing production, financing, transparency, strategy, leverage and performance which must be reversed.

Thomas Poole spoke in support of funding for the Women's House of Hope – New Greater Zion which serves emergency and transitional shelter for women, children and now men. He reported they are committed to serving the citizens of Durham who are homeless due to foreclosure, domestic violence, social discrepancies, poverty, unemployment or wages that are not enough to maintain a dwelling. He talked about working with ex-offenders, discussed the partnership with the North Carolina Public Safety and Orange County Correctional Facility through their prison ministry and that Dr. Cash has purchased and donated a facility for men; however, funds are needed from the City to make repairs on that property at 500 Lakeland Street.

Mayor Bell closed the public hearing.

**Public Comments at Public Hearing
Monday, February 13, 2012 at 7:00 P.M.
Board of County Commissioners
(Excerpted from Approved Minutes)**

Public Hearing – FY 2012-2013 Annual Action Plan

Chairman Page recognized Reginald Johnson, Interim Director of the City of Durham's Department of Community Development. Mr. Johnson announced that Durham anticipates receiving approximately \$76,991 in HOME Consortium funds from the US Department of Housing and Urban Development. The purpose of this meeting is to receive citizen comments on how City-County HOME Consortium funds can be used to address housing needs in Durham for the 2012-2013 fiscal year.

Ms. Wilmur Conyers, Federal Programs Coordinator with the Department of Community Development, further explained that the City is required to hold at least two public hearings. The second public hearing is anticipated for April. The Plan must be submitted to HUD by May 15 of each year.

Chairman Page opened the public hearing. He recognized the following speakers:

Debbie White, representing CASA, spoke about rental housing assistance needed for citizens, and especially those with disabilities. CASA will be constructing apartments on Guess Road for veterans in the upcoming year.

Philip Azar, representing Habitat for Humanity, spoke about the importance of helping homeowners in need of assistance. He noted programs including a sweat equity program, and a second mortgage program that assisted homeowners. He noted the importance of having a good rental market as well.

Will Sutton, representing the Citizens Advisory Committee (CAC), noted that the CAC works to enhance housing and quality affordability for Durham's citizens by advising City Council and the Board of County Commissioners regarding housing and community development.

Chairman Page closed the public hearing.

Vice Chair Reckhow requested a report from staff on the policy the Board adopted allowing for properties the County owns as a result of nonpayment of taxes to be made available to nonprofits for housing programs. Specifically, she asked if the policy had ever been used. Are there properties the County has owned for a long period of time that would make them eligible? If the policy has not been used, why? County Manager Ruffin will research and respond back.

Chairman Page commended CASA on the work done in the community.

Commissioner Howerton requested information on the Citizens Advisory Committee.